

The Alaskan Way Viaduct & Seawall Replacement Project

06.06



May 2006 Public Meetings – What We Heard Executive Summary

The Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project hosted three open houses in May to communicate the facts about the tunnel and elevated structure and to introduce options for constructing the alternatives.

Open house participants had the choice of viewing the boards on their own or taking a guided tour with a project team member. In addition, project staff were available to talk one-on-one with the public and to answer their questions.

Each open house attendee was provided with a comment form that asked questions about viaduct usage, construction, and the information presented at the open house. There was also space for general comment. Over 100 comment forms were received.

Most of the attendees at the three meetings use the viaduct on a daily or weekly basis, mostly during peak hours or off-peak hours during the day. Respondents said they used the viaduct to both bypass downtown and go to downtown. They most frequently drive a car by themselves, or with a passenger; West Seattle attendees were the only people who responded that they take the bus on the viaduct. The comment form also asked about frequent trips made on the viaduct. Downtown respondents most often use the viaduct to go

to SeaTac and West Seattle, West Seattle respondents were most often headed to downtown and Ballard, and Ballard respondents most frequently cited trips to downtown, West Seattle, and the SODO area.

Open House Attendance

- **May 22, Downtown Seattle**
Approximately 60 attendees, 30 comments received.
- **May 23, West Seattle**
Approximately 75 attendees, 44 comments received.
- **May 24, Ballard**
Approximately 80 attendees, 43 comments received.

What We Heard

Similar ideas about the alternatives and construction were heard at all three open houses.

- While many attendees found the open houses useful, some felt that there was a bias in the information presented.
 - Several respondents thought the information about the tunnel was much more complete than the information about the elevated structure.

- Many others wanted more information on two alternatives frequently in the news, retrofitting the viaduct and the no-replacement option.
 - Respondents used the comment form to advocate for or against options for viaduct replacement, and their opinions were fairly mixed and diverse.
 - Tunnel advocates wrote of the opportunity for waterfront parks and opening up the waterfront, while opponents were concerned about costs, the possibility of increased taxes, and the land above the tunnel going to private developers.
 - Supporters of the elevated structure pointed to lower costs and an opportunity to maintain the views of the waterfront and downtown that are available on the viaduct.
 - Many respondents asked that the retrofit and no-replacement option be studied more carefully, because of lower costs and fewer construction impacts.
 - Most respondents favored a shorter or an intermediate construction plan.
 - Citizens acknowledged that any construction plan would be difficult, and that it was best just to get construction over with, as long as it was done correctly.
 - West Seattle had a slightly higher percentage of respondents who favored the intermediate construction plan over the shorter construction plan, finding the intermediate plan to be a better mix of cost savings and less intense impact.
 - Most respondents felt that transit-related improvements were the best way to keep people moving during construction.
 - Suggestions included increased bus service, park-and-ride lots to the north and south of downtown, water ferries from West Seattle, and larger ride-free zones.
 - Some respondents also asked that transit should be more integrated into the project as a whole, so that people had transportation options other than cars.
 - Other ideas for managing traffic during construction included reducing parking on downtown streets to allow for more lanes, timing the traffic signals to the traffic count, providing adequate signage, bike trails, mandatory carpooling, and police supervision.
- ### Advertisement for the Open Houses
- Approximately 7,000 postcards were mailed to the project mailing list and to addresses in Ballard and West Seattle located near the meeting site.
 - Posters were hung throughout the corridor in libraries, community centers, and businesses.
 - Open house information was emailed to approximately 2,300 people in the April and May project list serve.
 - An announcement was prominently posted on the project website.
 - Display advertisements ran in twenty-one local and regional publications.
 - Community organizations were informed about the open houses and were asked to include an announcement in their community calendars.
 - A media advisory was issued to local media outlets.